

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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S E C R E T PARIS 30542

EXDIS

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, XF, FR

SUBJECT: MIDDLE EAST: FRENCH VIEWS NOVEMBER 28

ROME FOR AMBASSADOR IRWIN

1. SUMMARY: FRENCH, PIQUED AT BEING EXCLUDED FROM ARAB/ISRAELI PEACE CONFERENCE, ARE PRIVATELY PREDICTING ITS FAILURE. THEY WOULD LIKE EC-9 SUMMIT, ON EVE OF THIS CONFERENCE, TO MAKE STATEMENT ABOUT NECESSITY FOR "INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY" (I.E. UNSC PERMANENT MEMBERS) PARTICIPATION IN ME PEACE-MAKING PROCESS. END SUMMARY

2. AMONG OUR VARIOUS CONTACTS IN GOF, WE HAVE FOUND A PERVADING SENSE OF PESSIMISM ABOUT THE MIDDLE EAST PEACE TALKS WHICH GOF EXPECTS WILL CONVENE IN GENEVA IN MID-DECEMBER. ESSENTIALLY, THIS IS A REACTION TO THE MOUNTING EVIDENCE THAT EUROPE, AND SPECIFICALLY FRANCE, WILL BE EXCLUDED FROM PARTICIPATION IN THESE TALKS. THE FRENCH HAVE ACCEPTED THE INEVITABILITY OF THIS EXCLUSION, AT LEAST IN INITIAL PHASE, BUT WISH TO BE ON RECORD AS HAVING PREDICTED THAT THE CONFERENCE
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WILL FAIL IF PARTICIPATION IS LIMITED TO ISRAEL, THREE ARAB COUNTRIES, TWO SUPERPOWERS AND THE UNSYG; THEY BELIEVE IT SHOULD INCLUDE OTHER UNSC PERMANENT MEMBERS AS WELL AS OTHER ARABS (IRAQ, ALGERIA ETC).

3. OUR FRENCH SOURCES REVEAL THAT THERE WILL BE AN EC-9 ME EXPERTS MEETING IN COPENHAGEN ON NOVEMBER 30, PRIMARILY TO DRAW CONCLUSIONS CONCERNING THE RECENT ROUND OF DEMARCHES IN ARAB CAPITALS DECIDED BY THE NINE FOREIGN MINISTERS ON NOVEMBER 20. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE FRENCH AMBASSADORS IN ARAB CAPITALS WERE, IN MOST INSTANCES, CHOSEN TO MAKE THESE DEMARCHES WHICH CONSISTED OF DRAWING THE ATTENTION OF THE HOST GOVERNMENT TO THE NOVEMBER 6 EC-9 DECLARATION, POINTING OUT ITS FAVORABLE THRUST FROM THE ARAB STAND POINT AND SUGGESTING THAT ARAB GOVERNMENTS DRAW THE NECESSARY CONCLUSIONS THEREFROM. WE ALSO UNDERSTAND THAT THE FRENCH AMBASSADORS UNDERTOOK A SECOND SET OF DEMARCHES IN SELECTED ARAB CAPITALS, IN WHICH THEY REPRESENTED PURELY FRENCH POSITIONS. IN THESE UNILATERAL DEMARCHES, FRENCH AMBASSADORS HAD COUNSELLED PRUDENCE IN USE OF OIL WEAPON AND HAD SUGGESTED THAT, RECOGNIZING FRENCH SUCCESS IN OBTAINING FAVORABLE EC DECLARATION, ARAB SHOULD NOT MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR FRENCH TO MAINTAIN NECESSARY SOLIDARITY WITH ITS EUROPEAN PARTNERS. ACCORDING TO OUR INFORMATION, ARAB GOVERNMENTS RECEIVED FRENCH REPRESENTATIONS SYMPATHICALLY, HAD UNDOUBTEDLY UNDERSTOOD ALLUSION TO EC OIL SOLIDARITY, BUT CONCRETE RESULTS HAD NOT YET EMERGED.

4. FRENCH, NEVERTHELESS, SEEM PLEASED WITH THESE DEMARCHES. THEY WILL CERTAINLY URGE THEIR EC-9 PARTNERS AT NOVEMBER 30 MEETING TO DRAW POSITIVE CONCLUSION CONCERNING THIS EUROPEAN EFFORT. OUR SOURCES DO NOT EXPECT NOVEMBER 30 MEETING WILL PRODUCE ANY FURTHER STATEMENTS OF SUBSTANTIVE POSITIONS CONCERNING ME. THEY EXPECT FRENCH REP WILL PROPOSE ON NOVEMBER 30 THAT A ME STATEMENT BE DRAFTED FOR ISSUANCE BY EC-9 SUMMIT CONFERENCE DECEMBER 14-15. THEY CONSIDER IT IMPOSSIBLE ON THE EVE OF ME PEACE CONFERENCE FOR EUROPEAN CHIEFS OF GOVERNMENT, CONSIDERING THEIR SECRET

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VITAL ME INTERESTS, TO AVOID TAKING A POSITION CONCERNING THAT CONFERENCE. FRENCH CONTINUE TO INSIST THAT EUROPEANS HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO DEFINE IN AS MUCH DETAIL AS POSSIBLE WHAT THEY CONSIDER TO BE THE ESSENTIAL BASES FOR PEACE-MAKING IN THE MIDDLE EAST. THEY WOULD HOPE TO GO WELL BEYOND MERE INVOCATION OF UNSC RES 242 OR EVEN THE PRINCIPLES ENUNCIATED IN THE NOV 6 EC-9 DECLARATION. THESE BASES WOULD RESEMBLE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE THE POSITIONS AGREED BY THE SIX ORIGINAL EC NATIONS IN MAY-JUNE 1971.

5. THE FRENCH REALIZE, HOWEVER, THAT THEIR EUROPEAN PARTNERS ARE UNLIKELY TO AGREE TO A DETAILED STATE-

MENT OF SUBSTANTIVE POSITIONS BECAUSE THEY DO NOT GENERALLY SHARE THE FRENCH BELIEF THAT THE PUBLICATION OF A EUROPEAN "PEACE PLAN" WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO THE SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME OF THE PEACE CONFERENCE. AS A MINIMUM, THEREFORE, THE FRENCH WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS GO ON RECORD AS INSISTING ON THE NECESSITY FOR BROADER "INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY" (I.E. UNSC PERMANENT MEMBERS) PARTICIPATION IN THE PEACE-MAKING PROCESS. WE GATHER THAT PRESIDENT POMPIDOU PERSONALLY FEELS STRONGLY THAT FRANCE AND BRITAIN, AS UNSC PERMANENT MEMBERS, MUST BE CALLED UPON AT SOME POINT TO PLAY A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THE ARAB/ISRAELI SETTLEMENT, IF ONLY BY A PRIOR ASSURANCE THAT ANY COMPLETED PEACE ACCORD WOULD BE SUBMITTED TO THE UNSC FOR FORMAL APPROVAL AND APPROPRIATE GUARANTEES.

6. THE FRENCH PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UN RECENTLY CALLED ON SYG WALDHEIM TO DISCUSS BASIS OF LATTERS PARTICIPATION IN PEACE CONFERENCE BUT APPARENTLY GOT LITTLE EXCEPT IMPRESSION THAT SYG WAS SO DESIROUS OF ATTENDING THAT HE NOT EVEN INSISTING ON CHAIRING THE MEETING: FRENCH FEEL SYG CHAIRMANSHIP SHOULD BE MINIMUM BASIS FOR HIS ATTENDANCE AND IF POSSIBLE SHOULD BE APPROVED BY SECURITY COUNCIL CONSENSUS DECISION.

7. COMMENT: WE DEDUCE FROM OUR VARIOUS SOURCES' STATEMENTS THAT THE FRENCH HAVE LOBBIED WITH THEIR ARAB
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FRIENDS IN FAVOUR OF BROADER ATTENDANCE AT THE PEACE CONFERENCE. WE DO NOT BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT GOF IS PLAYING THE "SPOILER" ROLE OF UNDERMINING ANY ME NEGOTIATIONS FROM WHICH THEY WOULD BE EXCLUDED. INSTEAD, WE BELIEVE, THE FRENCH ARE SERIOUSLY CONCERNED BY THE POSSIBILITY OF THE CONFERENCE FAILING AND WISH TO PREPARE A BACKUP FORUM FOR NEGOTIATIONS IN SUCH AN EVENTUALITY.
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